

Excessive carbon tetrachloride

State health officials

close five valley wells

State health officials said Monday that six of 46 wells tested in Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley showed higher than acceptable levels of carbon tetrachloride.

Five of the six wells are shut down, according to Beverly Powell, spokeswoman for the state Health Services Department. A sixth is being used intermittently, she said,

because of need for its water.

The wells, from 14 water utilities, were tested in late August and this month, Ms. Powell said. The carbon tetrachloride levels ranged from .05 parts per billion to 11 ppb.

The department said the federal Environmental Protection Agency has not set a tolerance level for carbon tetrachloride, but the state has

established an "action level" of 5 ppb.

The wells found to have carbon tetrachloride levels higher than 5 parts per billion belong to the San Gabriel Valley Water Co., Valley County Water District, the city of Pasadena and the city of Los Angeles. A spokesman for the Pasadena Water Department said the Arroyo well, located near Jet Propulsion Laboratory, was found to have carbon tetrachloride levels of 7.6 ppb and 6.3 ppb in separate tests. The spokesman said the water is being blended with non-contaminated water and that Pasadenans are consuming water with a 1.6 ppb level of the substance.

State officials discussed the findings with utility officials on Monday, and testing will continue, Ms. Powell said.

The source of the carbon tetrachloride in the wells is unknown, the department said. It said the substance is toxic to humans, but only when they are exposed to much larger concentrations than those found in the wells.

Carbon tetrachloride is used in the manufacturing of chlorofluoromethanes for refrigeration, as an industrial cleaning agent and as a grain fumigant for pest control.

In a related development, a House Government Operations subcommittee in Washington, D.C., released a list Monday of 250 sites across the nation where hazardous chemicals could be seeping into groundwater, including 200 wells in California.

None were in the Star-News area.

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account for them. Instead, the physicists hypothesize that powerful electrical forces are at work, enhancing the heating of Io's interior and generating the molten stuff. Other Voyager findings show that some of the gas erupted from Io becomes electrified and streams down lines of magnetic force onto the polar regions of Jupiter, where it causes brilliant auroras.

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